

## **Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting**

**June 28, 2006**

### **Unapproved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman Tom Ronaghan, Judy Baker, Vince DePalmer, Earl Hersh, Art Nelligan

**Members Excused:** Gary Davis, Tom Hersh, Kevin Null, Sue Podobnik

**Members Absent:** Jody Ledford, Jim Rodriguez

**Ex-Officio Member Present:** Jeff Degitz

**Department Staff Present:** Brad Rogers, Bruce Dutterer, Bill Schaefer, Barbara Lages

**Guests:** Robin Hooper, Budget Analyst, Department of Management and Budget; Kathy Bell, Community Coordinator, Westminster Area Recreation Council.

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on June 28, 2006, in the Public Meeting Room of the County Office Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Tom Ronaghan.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Due to lack of a quorum, approval of the May Minutes was tabled until the July meeting.

### **UPDATES/ISSUES:**

Jeff Degitz provided the following updates:

**Concert Series** – The July Month of Sundays Concert Series begins on July 2 at the Westminster City Park. The concerts start at 7:00 p.m. and are free to the public.

**July - National Recreation and Parks Month** – The Public Information Office helped put together a calendar of recreation activities for the month of July that are taking place in County parks and facilities in an effort to get people out to the parks and participate in the variety of programs offered. The information is in the libraries and on the County's web site.

**Public Meetings** – Two public meetings will be held in July to present preliminary plans for development of new parks: Double Pipe Creek Park on July 6<sup>th</sup> and Bark Hill Ballfields on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Krimgold and Leister Parks** – A traffic study is being completed for Krimgold Park and Leister Park should be going before the Planning Commission in the next month or two.

**Gillis Falls Park** – With the building of the reservoir looking more promising, any plans for park development that would be located in the pool area have been suspended. This includes much of the planned trail. The Department is looking at other areas of the property for development. Reservoirs for Gillis Falls and Union Mills are being discussed again due to the amount of water that will be needed for these areas of the County.

**Program Open Space** – Full funding awarded for FY 2007 will help move forward larger projects including Leister and Krimgold Parks.

### **CAPITAL PROJECT REQUESTS:**

**Bennett Cerf Park Revitalization and Improvements** – Bill Schaefer presented a request for improvements to one of the County's oldest parks which is in poor condition. The project will include an additional 20-car parking lot; 40' hexagonal pavilion; play area with climbing wall; steel benches; new entrance sign; picnic tables; and improvements to both bridges. Bennett Cerf Park is heavily used and will be used even more when Bennett Cerf Drive Extended is completed and the parallel construction of an 8' wide trail. Estimated Cost: \$130,700.

**Bennett Cerf Drive (Extended) Trail Design and Construction** – Bill Schaefer presented a project request to design and develop a 2-mile long, 8' wide macadam trail with one bridge from Rt. 27 to Rt. 97. The trail development will be coordinated with the proposed parallel Bennett Cerf Drive Extended project currently in the Public Works FY10 and 11 CIP so that grading and paving of the trail can be completed within the same timeframe. The trail will parallel the new road within the right-of-way. Estimated cost: \$1,168,200.

**Dog Park** – Brad Rogers presented a proposal for design and development of a 2.5 acre dog park that would include chain link fencing with 6 gates; a 15-car paved parking area; paved walkway to the site; waste dispensers and containers; signs; benches; and landscaping. The park would be divided into separate areas for small and large dogs. A proposed site is County-owned property on the east side of Route 97 North, opposite the new Meadow Branch Road intersection that would tie together with the proposed Bennett Cerf Drive and Westminster Community Pond capital projects' greenways. Many other Maryland counties have developed dog parks that are highly successful. Judy Baker asked who would oversee the park. Mr. Rogers advised that Howard County uses the honor system. They had 150 registered last year and registration can be done online. The Department is considering self-policing with periodic spot checks. Mr. Degitz stated that the key is to make registration affordable, possibly annually at the time of licensing. There are no plans to put in water or trash barrels. Recently, trash cans have been removed from Bennett Cerf Park to make it a "take your own trash" park and there have been no complaints or problems. Estimated project cost: \$55,000.

**Little Pipe Creek Trail** – Bruce Dutterer presented a request to design and develop a 3.5 mile macadam trail from Union Bridge to New Windsor along Route 75, connecting both towns. The 8'-10' wide trail with 2 pedestrian bridges would, primarily, follow along existing road right-of-ways and connect with the existing Union Bridge trail system. Both towns support the project that would allow for a year-round family recreational opportunity. Estimated cost: \$2,194,500.

**Sandymount Gym** – Bill Schaefer presented a request for design and development of a 6,800 sq. ft. gymnasium and 10'x10' office space as part of the new library which is planned to begin construction within the year. This proposal would be similar to the gym that will be constructed in the new South Carroll Senior Center. Mr. Degitz explained that the new library is being designed to accommodate another building; however, no decision has been made on who will occupy the building. The Department is lobbying for the gymnasium construction and use of the building. Sandymount and Deer Park Recreation Councils only have one school facility for their programs, so this facility would greatly benefit these communities. Estimated cost: \$1,638,000.

**West Carroll Park Development** – A request for development of a new park in western Carroll County was presented by Bruce Dutterer. The park would provide a multi-use facility for the New Windsor/Union Bridge areas. Project plans are submitted based on a proposed 75+ acre site. The park would provide fields to accommodate soccer/lacrosse/football and softball/baseball programs, paved walking trails, picnic areas and pavilion, parking, restrooms and landscaping. Funds for design were allocated in the FY07 capital budget. Estimated development cost: \$3,095,300.

**Westminster Community Pond Renovations** – Plans to renovate the Westminster Community Pond were presented by Brad Rogers. This 50 year old, heavily used park is in need of revitalization and replacement of numerous amenities and with the increasing population, it will continue to be used even more in the future. Proposed plans include grading; seeding; construction and paving of a new entrance drive, parking and trail areas; pavilions; new tot lot; lighting; pond improvements; and landscaping. The existing park entrance is very unsafe and the proposed plans to make the existing entrance an exit only and construct a new entrance in a safer area would need to be worked out with State Highways. Enhancement of the pond to remove safe havens for ducks and replacing the existing tot lot with new equipment in a location away from the pond are proposed. The park will also act as a major trail head when all the linear trails in this area are completed in the upcoming years. Estimated cost: \$392,325.

Mr. Degitz reported that three other requests were discussed with the Department but not presented:

Freedom Area Recreation Council – request to light a new field at Freedom Park. Because of Krimgold Park development, it was decided not to submit the project at this time.

Piney Run – Addition of a parking lot which may be completed with in-house staff.

Westminster Area Recreation Council – A general comment that their facilities are filling up and a recommendation to partner with the City of Westminster to look for property.

He also advised that consideration was given for artificial turf fields, which is being done in Howard and Baltimore Counties. The cost, however, is too high to consider at this time - \$600,000 to turn a grass field into artificial turf and another \$300,000 to maintain in 6 years.

The Capital Committee meeting was scheduled for July 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Recreation and Parks Office. The goal will be to submit a Capital Improvement Program that shows the need to continue with full Program Open Space funding. Mr. Degitz explained that the County received certification from the State allowing us to use our POS allocation for either acquisition or development, rather than half for acquisition and half for development as previously required.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Bruce Dutterer advised that the Deer Park trail project is in the process of going out to bid.

Barbara Lages reported that a proclamation will be presented to the County Commissioners on July 6<sup>th</sup> for National Recreation and Parks Month and on July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Therapeutic Recreation Council camp participants will present the Commissioners with hand-designed hats. Both events will be shown on the local cable channel.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. with a motion from Earl Hersh, seconded by Judy Baker.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeff Degitz, Director

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Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary